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ABSTRACT

Faculty from the Department of Speech at Mexico State University set out to design a course in interpersonal and public communication for lifelong learners that would be relevant and appeal to both older adults and younger traditional-aged students working toward certification as a gerontological care provider. The course was designed to teach understanding and acceptance of the aging process, create an understanding of the nature of the self-concept and factors that are believed to stabilize it at a positive level, provide opportunities for socialization and interaction in small groups, encourage older learners to remain mentally active, and stress the value of past experience to society's current problem-solving challenges. Despite the careful needs assessment and curriculum planning efforts undertaken to develop the course, insufficient enrollment forced its cancellation. Lack of a comprehensive publicity effort, the inconvenient meeting time and location assigned for the course, and an inadequate description of the course in the course schedule were cited as probable reasons behind the course's failure to attract sufficient enrollment. These problems were addressed so that the course could attract the necessary number of students to continue its existence. (MN)

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TEACHING COMMUNICATIVE EFFECTIVENESS
TO
LIFE LONG LEARNERS

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(Presented at 31st Annual Meeting
Western Gerontological Society
Denver, Colorado March 19, 1985)

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BACKGROUND

Efforts to develop a Gerontology training program at New Mexico State University culminated in the Fall of 1983 with establishment of The Institute for Gerontological Research and Education (TIGRE). Funded by the federal Administration on Aging and New Mexico State University, the Institute formally began operation in October, 1983, with the broad objective of establishing training programs for care providers of the gerontological population.

Rationale for the new program was based upon demographic and educational conditions peculiar to New Mexico: higher than average poverty among elders of the state, particularly those of Hispanic and American Indian minority populations; greater than average in-migration of elders without family support systems; and a state-wide scarcity of gerontological education/training programs for care-providers.

Among the explicitly stated goals of the original Institute and/or the application for re-funding which is now pending were:

- a. Develop instructional materials leading to a core curriculum for a minor in gerontology.
- b. Develop and strengthen a multi-disciplinary certification program.
- c. Develop field practicum opportunities.
- d. Expand to branch campuses.

The certification program is under way and its first recipient will complete training in May, 1985. Its requirements include six credits of core courses, four credits of practicum, and six credits of electives. A portion of the Administration on Aging grant was allocated to solicitation of a broad range of elective courses for the certification candidate. Implementation of this goal involved offering \$300 stipends to faculty and/or departments proposing courses which were accepted by the Institute and were offered during the 1984-85 academic year. As a result, gerontology-related electives are offered in sociology, English, health science, social work, family life, child development, physical education, nursing, speech, and communicative disorders.

As that suggests, two of the accepted elective courses were in the communication area and were proposed by faculty of our Department of Speech.

The Communicative Disorders branch of the department prepared a course entitled "Normal and Disordered Communication Associated With Aging" and the Speech Communication branch offered "Interpersonal and Public Communication For the Life Long Learner." Speech Department faculty also assisted with planning and teaching the interdisciplinary seminar on aging, the first core course offered by the Institute.

RATIONALE FOR THE COURSE

The balance of this report will describe the rationale for the communication and aging course the authors developed at New Mexico State University, the nature of the course, student response to the first offering of the course, and future plans for the course.

The first step in course development was to investigate apparent need for offering formal training in communication to the specific clientele we hoped to serve. Could we justify venturing into what was for us new academic territory? Demographically, TIGRE already had established the almost total lack of training for care providers for the elderly in the southern New Mexico region served by this university. This failure to offer training was especially important because New Mexico is the fifth fastest growing state in the Union in terms of increase of its aging population. The over sixty segment of the state's population rose 62% between 1970 and 1980 (N.M. H.S.D., 1981). More than one fourth of the New Mexicans who are over 60 are below the official poverty income level and that percentage is even higher for minority elderly. Furthermore, the greatest growth in New Mexico's over sixty population has been among Anglo in-migrants who frequently have left family support systems behind in the snow belt.

Geographically, New Mexico State University is the state's land grant institution, with six undergraduate colleges and a graduate school and four two-year branch campuses. It enrolls slightly more than 12,000 students on its main campus. It is located in the largest city in southern New Mexico, Las Cruces, which has slightly more than 50,000 residents. It lies within fifty miles of the El Paso-Juarez international border community which totals nearly one million residents. Its mild climate and close proximity to several large military and missile testing facilities have made it an increasingly popular retirement locale.

But-- education for retirees? Actually, there have been many quite persuasive appeals in the past decade that we provide quality opportunities for lifelong learning for our elderly citizens. It is generally agreed that this segment of our population want, deserve, and can benefit from exposure to challenging activities. As neophytes in this area, our first task was to get a clearer understanding of what is meant by "life long learning".

Marcus (1978, p. 128) suggested that lifelong learning is concerned with "the formation and transformation of values throughout a lifetime." Referring specifically to the elderly, Marcus added, "Sometimes it is sparked by personal experiences and may be part of the intrinsic value of acquiring knowledge for its own sake." Schuetz (1980, p. 33) agreed that lifelong learning differs from traditional programs "by emphasizing learning for the sake of learning." Former Vice President Walter Mondale (1976, p. 43) was more specific when he called this phase of learning a process in which the older person "learns to express himself, to communicate, and to question the world through his various experiences." Thus, it would appear reasonable to suggest that a course in the basics of communication could and, indeed, should fall within the aegis of life long learning.

Actually, life long learning has had at least tacit support from our federal government for nearly two decades. The Older Americans Act, enacted in 1965 and revised and extended by subsequent Congressional action, included a set of objectives for older Americans which, taken together, is often referred to as "aging's Magna Carta." Included in these objectives are "the best possible physical and mental health," "pursuit of meaningful activity within the widest range of civic, cultural, and recreational opportunities," and "freedom, independence, and the free exercise of individual initiative in planning and managing one's life." (Older Americans, 1981, p.33)

In further stressing his commitment to life long learning, Mondale (1976, p. 44) asserted that "we can not expect an education concluded at age eighteen or twenty-one to be still adequate . . . for the elderly." Insisting that lifelong learning programs benefit not just the elderly, but our nation and our society, he said, "one important way we can continue to cultivate our heritage as a great democracy and preserver of freedom is by revitalizing the educational enterprise to make it relevant to all citizens throughout their lives." (Mondale, 1976, p.43)

Another justification for encouraging older learners is to short circuit the myth that we are supposed to deteriorate or stagnate at a certain age. This sort of reasoning is especially damaging because it tends to become self-fulfilling in the sense that when the elderly expect mental stagnation, it is likely to occur. As Carmichael (1976, p.122) asked, "Have we been programmed to see old age as dysfunctional, useless, ugly, generally negative? . . . Does the importance of youth as a value in our society cause us to devalue ourselves in old age?"

Philosophers, educators and gerontologists agree that the best means of heading off that potentially self-fulfilling prophecy is through education. Henri Nouwen (1974, p. 154) has urged that "every man and woman should consider aging a unique opportunity for enriching their own lives." Jessup (1969, p. 25) agreed and he opined "Education is essential for every person in every cycle of life and discontinuance of education is like mental amputation." Jessup (1969, p. 25) added that such mental amputation is inevitable for the older learner "unless he continues to learn; only then can he make the most of himself." Carhill (1978-79, p. 7) reinforced this sentiment, stating "Perhaps most deeply, adults are, or can be, influenced by the widespread feeling that one is never too old to learn."

It also is relevant to note that many of our elderly are under educated in relation to the general population. Soldo (1980) reported that as of 1980, only 40% of Americans over 65 held high school diplomas and nearly 3 million of the over sixty five age group are classed as "functionally illiterate." The educational gap between generations is narrowing, however, as it is predicted (Ward, 1984) the average educational level of older persons, only about 8 years of school in 1940, will have approximated 12 years by 1990.

Stephen Bailey (1976, p. 39) may best have summarized these arguments for life long learning when he noted that Seneca said "old age and happiness are frequently strangers" but that estrangement is not inevitable, "as a wide variety of education endeavors could still materially dispel some of that gloom." He continued, "The instrumental purpose in such education should not be to obliterate all trauma associated with growing old. It should be to maximize for an appreciable and growing percentage of elderly the chance that they will reflect the hoary Chinese in Yeats's 'Lapis Lazuli':

"Their eyes, mid many wrinkles, their eyes,
Their ancient glittering eyes are gay."

Another obvious question for planners of this course concerned content guidelines. It was agreed that first and foremost, it must be quality education. Sawhill (1978-79, p. 80) quoted an older learner who insisted that he and his peers did not want "... the educational equivalent of baby food -- mashed, strained, predigested courses especially designed for 'mature' students." As Sawhill responded, "... we need to assure a first class experience" for older learners. Also, such quality programs should encourage interaction between ages and degrees of experience. Mondale (1976, p. 43) urged that "the stimulation and creativity that arise from contacts between generations are a priceless commodity we can not afford to squander as individuals or as a society. I can think of no better way to encourage such contact than to enhance the opportunities for an active interchange through education." This potential for intergenerational stimulation cited by Mondale was to prove particularly relevant to the course about to be described herein.

Narrowing our inquiries to our academic interests, we next asked whether education for older students should include communication and, if so, what aspects of communication are most essential, or promise greatest benefit? Old age is not unique in having to face crises, but as Schuetz (1980, p.35) asserted, "These persons face 'new' crises . . . resulting from the death of loved ones, losses of health and physical strength, or displacement from homes and familiar environments. These crises involve changes in self-concept, roles, and problem solving strategies." In other words, the elderly have, through their years, solved many problems, but these uniquely aging types of problems must be faced by people who often do not have the experience or skills needed to cope. A popular theory regarding one approach to coping is labeled "disengagement." Schuetz (1980, p. 35) sees this theory as assuming that older persons consciously or at least subconsciously reduce their emotional commitment or involvement with associates because of an awareness that they must change their social and/or economic roles.

Communication experts agree that these changes through which the elderly find themselves going relate directly to communication and that solving these problems is facilitated by developing skills in problem solving communication. Carmichael (1976, p. 123) suggested "Disengagement theory . . . should actually be considered an interpersonal communication theory." Josephs (1978, p. 12) was even more specific when she advised that the skills which should be made available to all older adults include: "values clarification, decision making, problem solving, group interaction, and critical thinking or analysis."

One of the specific communication-related skills needed by the elderly is, therefore, problem solving. Schuetz (1980, pp. 36, 38) suggested, "Problem solving sessions are valuable in giving older persons an opportunity to talk about the issues that are important to them. Problem solving strategies are . . . needed . . . so that they can more effectively cope with new needs and new environments." Field (1972, p. 178) found that problem solving is a way of assisting older adults in finding "answers to the many questions which have been troubling them for a long time." She also observed (Field, 1972, p. 178) that older learners appreciated "the opportunity for significant conversation" rather than conversational fluff.

It is generally agreed that when communication breaks down or becomes so ineffective that problems simply seem beyond solution attempts at suicide may result. Miller (1979) reported that an estimated 10,000 persons aged sixty and over commit suicide each year, representing approximately one-fourth of all suicides. In fact, the rate of suicide for white males aged 75-84 is more than twice that of white males 15-24. While improved communication skills might not appreciably reduce this toll, these figures would appear to suggest any approach which would enhance communicative effectiveness should be tried.

Based on these perspectives to life long learning, the purpose of the balance of this report is to describe a specific course designed to train students to effectively solve both personal and social problems. When initially offered, the course was entitled "Interpersonal and Public Communication for Life Long Learners."

DEVELOPING THE COURSE

As the title suggests, this course was designed as a hybrid or blend, both in terms of intended clientele and in content. The goal was to meet the needs of, and thus appeal to, both the older life long learner and the younger traditional student working toward certification as a gerontological care and/or service provider. In terms of content, the objectives were to enhance student skills in interpersonal, small group, and public address situations, with special emphasis on problem solving and conflict resolving skills.

As the course evolved, an attempt was made to ground it on two basic tenets. First, effective communication is essential to the life success of all humans but it may be more vital to the coping ability of the elderly than for any other age group. Second, intergenerational interaction, such as a course such as this would encourage between twenty-year-olds and sixty-plus-year-olds, holds rich potential for everyone involved. Kogan and Shelton (1962) reported clear misperceptions between generations. For instance, young persons thought older citizens needed assistance more than anything else, while older people identified their greatest need as a positive response from others. The young supposed the elderly most feared death, while the elderly reported they most feared poverty and dependence. Young people thought the old most resented the young and youthfulness, while older people said what they most resented is rejection and reference to age as being totally negative. Even if not explicitly addressed, the enrollment mix sought by this course would inevitably correct such misperceptions.

The first specific objective of this course would be to work toward a clear understanding of the self concept and its significance to effective communication and then toward developing in each student an accurate, up-to-date, positive self-image. Many college students and probably an even larger proportion of older learners tend to self-deprecation, emphasizing their own perceived shortcomings or exerting great energy attempting to preserve an obviously out-dated self-concept.

Why do older learners tend toward negative self-concepts? Maude Graham (1981) has suggested it results from a blend of what she called "attribution and altercasting." By this she meant the aged tend to view themselves as incompetent, incapacitated, forgetful, talkative, bossy, etc. and they then assume this self-attribution will automatically be shared by those with whom they come in contact, thereby reinforcing some of our cultural stereotypes.

Even among those who have led relatively self-assured pre-retirement lives, this emphasis on the negative is not surprising. They are apt to find themselves suddenly in a dependent status, often completely reversing child-parent roles in the family, with loss of at least some economic, physical, and social control over their lives. They frequently feel they still have knowledge, skills, intelligence, and abilities for which they can find no use. They also become aware of physical and bodily image changes. Many believe that aging means inevitable loss of attractiveness, especially when they seem to be losing so much -- hair, teeth, hearing, health, friends, loved ones, mobility, visual acuity, smoothness of skin, even control of one's destiny. At any rate, research does suggest that older adults apply different criteria than do young adults in judging interpersonal attraction. (Webb, 1981)

There also is a tendency among young adults to overcompensate for the supposed reduced communicative capacity of the elderly -- talking slower, louder, with more careful articulation and with emphasis on simple social, superficial communication topics. This is one of the factors which leads to the even greater difficulty institutionalized elders have in maintaining a positive self-concept. What is not intended to be but seems to be derogatory or critical communication can be degrading to the older person, especially if uttered in their presence, repeatedly, and in a manner as if they can not hear or understand. It also may be fair to observe that the daily routine of many institutions is planned generally for the convenience of the institution, eliminating most freedom of choice, and that communication and personal needs have not always been a funding priority of grant-awarding agencies.

While a negative or out-dated self-concept will tend to reduce communicative effectiveness, training such as included in the course herein described can help offset or compensate for negative perceptions with activities designed to:

- a. Teach understanding and acceptance of the aging process
- b. Teach understanding of the nature of the self-concept and the factors which are believed to stabilize it at a positive level.

(I) Kalish (1975) has suggested that self concept will tend to stabilize when one has

- (A) a reasonably stable recent history
- (B) an anticipated reasonable standard of living
- (C) no strong fears of being left alone

- c. Provide opportunities for socialization, acceptance and interaction in small groups

(I) Nussbaum (1981) cited a number of studies which suggested that a positive relationship exists between social interaction and life satisfaction in the elderly.

- d. Encourage staying active, at least mentally
- e. Encourage expression of opinions, beliefs, values
- f. Stress the value of past experience to society's problem solving challenges of today.

A second specific objective of the course was to develop and/or enhance those problem-solving skills which will enable the older learner not only to bring his past experience to bear on society's problems, but to cope with personal communication problems and challenges which are inevitable consequences of new settings, new roles, new expectations and needs. Especially relevant to the enrollment mix we seek in this course is Webb's (1981) observation that many elderly do, in fact, live in a social world very similar to that of college students. Friends, neighbors, even roommates come and go, move in and out. However, as she notes, the elderly have much less mobility and fewer alternatives available to them, and research has shown the secret to social survival among the elderly is replacing friends and associates before isolation habits set in.

The course was scheduled to meet once a week for 150 minutes for a total of 15 weeks and was to have enabled the student to earn three credit hours of either undergraduate or graduate credit, since our institution permits double numbering of courses. It was decided that we would proceed without a required text but would rely heavily on handouts and placing of materials on library reserve. However, we did require a text for graduate students, Oyer and Oyer's Aging and Communication (1976). Since those students taking the course for graduate credit are of course expected to complete additional assignments, the plan was to have them abstract chapters from Oyer and Oyer and orally report on them to the class.

It might be difficult to decide whether this course should be described as an andragogical endeavor or a blend of pedagogy and geragogy, but at any rate, we instructors pledged to each other our commitment to lecture as little as possible and to involve students in every phase of the class. Our goal was to rely on class discussion activities to explicate basic theories and then to devote much of each session to individual and group application/demonstration of those theories.

Following introductions of the course, syllabus, instructors, and each other, the initial focus would be on defining terms, especially the term "communication" as it will be used in the course context. This probably would involve comparing student generated models of the process. This would lead to discussion of the importance of communication to older Americans, culminating in brainstorming about the many specific settings where communication skills are, in fact, coping and survival skills.

Based on this groundwork, the next discussion setting would look at personal examples of communication breakdown, stressing at the same time that quantity of communication does not insure quality and that communication as we are defining it will not immediately solve all our social and personal problems.

The logical follow up to consideration of class members' communication related problems would be searching together for possible causes. As each cause was identified, exemplified and understood, individually or in dyads or small groups, we would work to minimize or eliminate those causal factors. For instance, as outdated or distorted self-concepts emerged as a cause of communication failures, we would work on self-analysis exercises so as to move toward more accurate, more current, more positive self-images. As we identified the common inability to anticipate and allow for the wide range of individual differences in our perceptual skills, we would employ exercises which would enhance our empathetic skills. When we agreed that many of us were ineffective listeners, we would work on listening skills. When we found we perceive ourselves as inept at responding on a dyadic or social level, we would strive to recognize and avoid disconfirming responses and work on active listening skills. When we were ready to admit that our encoding-decoding processes were based on one-word-one-meaning beliefs, we would look at approaches to semantic skills. When we admitted that we habitually tend to respond to others defensively, we would work on Gibb's (1961) defensiveness prevention behaviors. And, with realization that we may be insensitive to the broad range of non verbal communication behaviors, we would work toward more skillful encoding and decoding via the non verbal channels.

The next step in the source's evolution would focus on dyadic skills. After defining and sharing examples of interpersonal conflict, we would discuss personal styles of handling conflict. This would lead to exercises designed to encourage an assertive style of conflict management. We then would focus on conflict management and resolution skills emphasizing the no-lose, win-win approach

often attributed to Bach and Gordon (1968). Every effort would be made to provide each student an opportunity to practice no-lose problem solving of realistic conflicts, involving at least the following steps:

1. Personal identification and analysis of the problem in terms of your own unmet needs.
2. Description of those unmet needs to your partner in terms of non-judgmental "I" language.
3. Soliciting in turn your partner's feelings and unmet needs regarding the situation, always employing active listening on the part of both to insure mutual understanding.
4. Considering together all possible solutions or means to the ends toward which you have agreed to work.
5. Selecting a solution which seems likely to leave neither interactant feeling he is a "loser."
6. Implementing the chosen solution and setting a definite checkup or followup session to evaluate progress.

The extent of explanation, amplification, and sequential practice needed will of course vary with student and situation.

Finally the class would focus on small group, rather than individual, problem solving. After consideration of the various small group discussion formats and of the possible relevance of the scientific method to structuring of group process, practical application would focus on group skills and on addressing of actual problems the students were facing in their environments. That is, the problems the groups would be analyzing and attempting to solve would be relevant to them -- at the home, neighborhood, institution, community, state, or even national level.

There seems little doubt that any communication course designed for older learners must teach the skills needed to handle interpersonal problems, but equally essential is a focus on society's problems and small group techniques for solving them. While the elderly have numerous interpersonal problems which are peculiar to their age group, often involving desires to retain control over their lives, activities, decision making, mobility, etc., they are equally interested in and well suited for discussion of and solution-seeking for society's many problems.

Schuetz (1980) discovered that the elderly consider a number of society's problems significant to them -- disintegration of family, rising cost of medical care, breakdown of religious values, media and street violence, crime

and punishment, terrorism, problems of financing education, etc. She also observed (1980, p. 39) that the "older learners seemed better informed than undergrads -- the elderly are well read and follow news programming closely." Carmichael (1976, p. 15) reported a TV viewing survey which revealed that "with the single exception of the Lawrence Welk show, the elderly subjects preferred news and public affairs programs." Furthermore Bunding (1978, p.4) reported the older learner has been found to "surpass young learners in verbal and integrative ability."

It therefore seems reasonable to suggest that interest in and knowledge of society's problems already exists and that as class participants, older learners would welcome the opportunity to discuss current issues and, in the process, move beyond simple "doom and gloom" problem pointing to development of skills in problem analysis and solving.

Such a unit should be subdivided into consideration of problem analysis, causal analysis and solution evaluation and advocacy. Problem analysis would first consider the values and benefits of problem solving, historically and to contemporary society. Attention then would focus on criteria for determining the existence of a problem and its appropriateness and susceptibility to small group consideration. Finally, we would look at approaches to measuring the seriousness and immediacy of the problem for particular audiences or groups or age segments of society.

Once problems are identified and analyzed in terms of existence, persistence and seriousness, and appropriateness to class and small group consideration, attention should shift to the advisability of attacking only the symptoms of a problem area, or searching out and attacking causes. It will be important that students understand that while causal attack normally is preferable, it is not always possible or practical. Some groups might benefit from study of methods of identifying and proving causation, possibly including Mill's canons of causation and various analytic techniques such as establishing a chain of causes or narrowing from multiple causes to those causal factors which are most susceptible to treatment or elimination. (Walter and Scott, 1973, pp. 180-197) At any rate, some attention should be focussed on the concept of causation.

The course would then move to consideration of all solutions which could conceivably attack causes or relieve symptoms which have been identified by the group. Learners would be encouraged to establish what seemed reasonable, defensible criteria for acceptable solutions; then to evaluate all possible

solutions produced by earlier brainstorming, in terms of these agreed upon criteria; then to select what appears to be the most practical, desirable solution; and then to discuss the steps necessary for implementation and testing of the choice. Because this implementation process often necessitates advocacy of the chosen solution in order to gain its general acceptance, practice could be provided in supporting a solution by methods of explanation, analogy, and use of authoritative testimony. This phase also lends itself very readily to use of various debating formats.

This type of unit obviously would need to be adapted to individual and group needs, interests, backgrounds and experience. In some settings, instructors might find it advisable to practice the basic techniques on a class or fairly large group basis and then, after some consideration of small group dynamics, proceed to practice sessions with groups of five to seven discussants.

COURSE SUMMARY

Admittedly the material suggested here could be structured into two or more courses, but the skills embodied herein are basic to communicative effectiveness for the older learner. Such a course or courses would certainly help older learners meet those three goals elucidated in the Aging Magna Carta: "the best possible physical and mental health," "pursuit of meaningful activity within the widest range of civic, cultural, and recreational opportunities," and "freedom, independence, and the free exercise of individual initiative in planning and managing one's life." Ultimately Yeats's poetic prediction might thereby be realized for these older learners and (Bailey, p. 39) "their eyes, their ancient glittering eyes" will be gay.

However well planned this course may have been, it met the same fate as many "best laid plans." Insufficient enrollment forced its cancellation/postponement.

Reasons the Course Did Not Attract Sufficient Enrollment

Lack of response can not be attributed to a single factor but to a combination of circumstances. First, the course was poorly titled. "Interpersonal and Public Communication for Life Long Learners" may have seemed a quite descriptive summary of content and of intended clientele but we did not have the foresight to anticipate how it would appear when listed in the course schedule. INT/PB CM-LF LG LR - CR may have been the best the schedule editors could do for us but it did not communicate very effectively to the first time student, or, for that matter, to any student.

Secondly, the assigned time and place of meeting were less than ideal. Listed time was from 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. in a campus building. This probably was fine for continuing students but for older learners tempted to venture back into the classroom after years away, having to come to the campus and locate a specific building and room near the center of the campus after dark just made the whole prospect uninviting. Some also reported that the two and one half hour time slot seemed "terribly long." There seemed no way to inform those prospects unfamiliar with campus routine that a three credit course must meet for 150 minutes and that the session would include breaks.

Another problem was the trauma of registration itself. New Mexico State may be an atypical campus but one two-hour period is set aside at the end of the last registration day, the night before instruction begins, for non-degree, part-time, continuing education type students to take care of registration details. If the student has never registered at our institution or has not registered within the past two years, a permit to register must be secured. Students are not told this in advance and upon arriving at 5 p.m. they are told the computer will not provide that permit to register until the next day, and only during daytime hours when most employed potential students can not return to campus. Once that hurdle is overcome, the seeker of life long learning is sent in turn to a series of seemingly endless lines. New Mexico now offers very minimal tuition fees for those over age 65 but those class slots are available only when all full-tuition students have been accommodated, so the older student must wait until the very end of registration, establish he is eligible, and find classes which have not filled. One of the authors of this paper went through the entire procedure with his wife this January and found it frustrating, exhausting and totally traumatic. No wonder we have trouble attracting the older student.

Finally, we should have done a more comprehensive advertising job. We did prepare leaflets which we considered attractive and which did elicit some

inquiries. On it we stressed that the class would take place in a personable small group atmosphere, we mentioned the reduced tuition option, and we stressed that the course offered an adventure in learning even for those who had never before attended college. The leaflet was entitled "Communication is Life" and some suggested that should have been the title of the course. However, the agencies upon which we depended to distribute the leaflets simply did not secure wide enough distribution.

Plans to Increase Enrollment

The course will again be offered in the Fall, 1985 semester. For purposes of listing in the schedule, we have fallen back on the traditional title for this type of course: "Communication and Aging". We assume all of this can go into the schedule without abbreviations and there should be little confusion about the nature of the course. We are attempting to schedule the course on a Saturday morning and, if possible, at the community senior center. We also hope to talk the administration into permitting registration on the first Saturday morning of the class. Failing that, we hope to get permission for non-degree students of an age which makes them eligible for low tuition to register any time during the week prior to commencement of instruction. We also intend to secure and then publicize all the detailed steps which must be taken by returning students and to suggest how best to avoid last minute deadlines and waiting in line.

Finally, we hope to make personal contact and presentations at the senior centers, senior church groups, and the gerontology practicum and seminar classes.

We believe this course can provide vitally important skills both to the older citizen and those younger people training to be care-providers for the gerontological population. We believe once the course is offered its perceived value will be publicized by its students and enrollment will be assured in future semesters.

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